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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1308
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1175
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 1744
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2307
RHMFTIU/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
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SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: POSITIVE START TO THE U.S.-TURKISH
COOPERATION DIALOGUE

REF: A) ASHGABAT 0161

B) SECSTATE 07210

1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

2. (SBU) SUMMARY: USAID Country Representative met on March 11 with Turkish International Development Agency (TIKA) Coordinator in Turkmenistan and the Turkish Embassy in Ashgabat's Deputy Chief of Mission to explore and identify possible assistance cooperation activities in Turkmenistan. In a positive and productive initial meeting, several specific areas of potential cooperation were identified, principally in the health and agricultural sectors. In the coming weeks, USAID will organize meetings between TIKA and selected USAID implementing partners to discuss concrete ways in which TIKA and USAID's partners can work together. END SUMMARY.

3. (SBU) Following a February 1 meeting between the U.S. and Turkish Chiefs of Mission and Deputy Chiefs of Mission during which both sides agreed to pursue cooperation on assistance at the working level (Ref. A), USAID began efforts to arrange a meeting to discuss potential joint activities. USAID Country Representative met on March 11 with Turkish International Development Agency (TIKA) Coordinator and Turkish Embassy in Ashgabat's Deputy Chief of Mission to explore and identify possible assistance cooperation activities in Turkmenistan. The TIKA Coordinator in Turkmenistan asked USAID to lead the discussion, which ultimately resulted in the areas of interest listed below.

PREVENTING AVIAN INFLUENZA (AI)

4. (U) Both sides recognized that their governments place a high priority on preventing Avian Influenza in Turkmenistan. From Turkey's perspective, in addition to sharing potential bird migration routes with Turkmenistan, a TIKA-funded poultry project in Tejen was closed by the government due to perceived risks from AI.

5. (U) USAID/W recently launched the STOP AI program, which will support AI prevention activities in Turkmenistan by working with the State Veterinary Service. Representatives of the implementing partner, DAI/Winrock International, are in Ashgabat currently to identify potential areas of activity, principally with the State Veterinary Service. Upon completion of the USAID mission later this week, USAID will share with TIKA information on possible AI-related activities with the veterinary service. From its side, TIKA agreed to inquire with Ankara whether it would be able to participate in AI-related activities through provision of equipment, training or other inputs.

SUPPORTING FAMILY MEDICINE TRAINING

6. (U) Through its partner, the American International Health Alliance (AIHA), USAID in close cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan (MOHMI) previously established training facilities and provided various training courses on Family Medicine, Health Management topics, and Women's Health issues to instructors from the project sites both within and outside of Turkmenistan, including USA, Kazakhstan, Georgia, and Ukraine.

7. (U) In response to the request of MOHMI, AIHA equipped project sites with computers, office equipment, Internet connection, and various training aids for both clinical and non-clinical purposes. Partners and experts of AIHA assist their Turkmen partners to adapt international guidelines, training programs, and related evidence-based strategies and standards to incorporate them in their curricula and training plans.

8. (U) To build on these efforts, TIKA expressed a willingness to consider sending doctors to Turkey for further training in family medicine, and will consult with Ankara. USAID proposed to arrange a meeting between TIKA and its health program management specialist in

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Ashgabat to further discuss how such cooperation might work.

IMPROVING MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

19. (U) Beginning January 1, 2007, all medical institutions in Turkmenistan shifted to the live birth definitions recommended by the World Health Organization. The transition to the WHO recommended definition of live births means a step away from the former Soviet recommendations. This decision by the Government of Turkmenistan was a key step toward improving new-born care and survival and is expected to help to reduce infant and child mortality. USAID has supported Turkmenistan's transition to the international standards of live birth, along with a variety of other donors, such as UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These international agencies support the government efforts at national and sub-national levels through institutional capacity building of managers and academia at medical educational institutions and through introduction into pre-service curricula.

110. (U) TIKa expressed an interest in supplying equipment, such as incubators, to equip maternal care facilities in Turkmenistan, which would supplement ongoing USAID-funded training programs. If such equipment is not produced in Turkey, then possible interest to support training courses for doctors could be considered. As a next step, USAID's health program management specialist in Ashgabat will meet with TIKa to discuss in greater detail how potential cooperation might work. TIKa agreed to consider options for cooperation in this area via either equipment provision or training.

INTRODUCING MODERN GREENHOUSE TECHNOLOGIES

111. (U) TIKa expressed interest in USAID's ongoing activities that support the dissemination of new greenhouse technologies. A demonstration greenhouse in Gorjaw village (Ahal province) was built in an existing greenhouse production area to show the potential of new production technologies and possible diversification from the existing ones. The demonstration greenhouse was built with several features new to Turkmen farmers: a higher roof, drip irrigation system, multiple-source heating, and improved ventilation systems. USAID supported a study-tour to Turkey in 2007 to learn about modern greenhouse technologies in use there. The project organizes field days for farmers to observe these improved features, and the greenhouse is being used as a training center by USAID projects to teach greenhouse vegetable producers how to increase yields. So far, at least five field days have been organized and more than 100 farmers trained since November 2007.

112. (U) As a next step, USAID proposed to arrange a meeting between TIKa, Winrock, and USAID's economic program management specialist in Ashgabat to discuss further how such cooperation might work within the framework of USAID's agricultural programs in Turkmenistan implemented by Winrock.

INCREASING PISTACHIO PRODUCTION

113. (U) USAID was interested to learn about TIKa's project supporting pistachio nut production. Since TIKa has been working with groups of pistachio farmers, USAID was willing to consider ways in which it might support these existing groups of farmers through technical assistance from its Farmer-to-Farmer program or the Agricultural Linkages (AgLinks) project, both implemented by Winrock International. The AgLinks project works to increase agricultural productivity in Turkmenistan (and Central Asia) by helping private-sector firms and farmers:

- improve market-driven agricultural production;
- develop key market-linking agri-businesses; and
- develop local capacity to understand, analyze and respond to market opportunities through marketing and market information support.

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114. (U) As a next step, USAID agreed to arrange a meeting among Winrock, USAID, and TIKa to discuss opportunities for cooperation. USAID's economic program management specialist in Ashgabat will participate on behalf of USAID.

115. (SBU) COMMENT: This was a productive meeting for both sides. In addition to specific areas of possible cooperation that were discussed, the Turkish side learned about the extent of the USG's development cooperation in Turkmenistan. Future meetings will allow an opportunity to explore the areas identified above in greater detail. We should expect slow steps toward cooperation at first, as each side gains a better understanding of the other's interests and policies, but this worthwhile engagement also presents the potential to bring TIKa into closer contact with the wider international development community in Turkmenistan. As it stands now, TIKa is not a visible player in donor circles, but appeared to be willing to consider such opportunities. END COMMENT.

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